

Teacher education: meeting the global demand and challenges in tertiary institutions in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Education is regarded as a tool of national growth in most societies and no nation can survive today in the face of the influence of globalization without training and providing qualitative education to her citizens. The teacher is at the center of the teaching and socialization process situate in the school and towards the realization of a nation's educational policy. This role is also complimentary to the functions performed by the agencies of socialization such as the family, mass media, religious organizations, peer group, and non-government organizations. Consequently, the paper examined the nature, importance, roles and challenges of teacher education in meeting the global demand in Nigerian. The paper identified institutional corruption at all levels of teacher education, quality of programme and products, weak admission policy of students, poor facilities provision and management as part of its challenges in Nigeria. Five recommendations were made which includes the provision of adequate facilities, e-learning environments and improved security in collaboration with the host communities.

Key words: teacher education, objectives, facilities, quality programmes,

1. INTRODUCTION

The worth of teacher education offered in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria reflects and determines the class of teachers that will be responsible for the qualitative instruction delivery in the educational system of the largest black nation on earth. Consequently, it is often said that the quality of teachers available to a nation determines the quality of education in that society. Since education is regarded as an instrument of national development, it is pertinent for those in authority to ensure that the objectives of teacher's education as reflected in the National Policy of Education (NPE, 2014) is pursued with all sense of purpose devoid of political, religious and ethnic colorations.

It is imperative to observe that, events in the fields of teacher education are not amazing but worrisome to many stakeholders in the educational sector due to the quality of teachers the tertiary institutions are producing in the squall of underfunding in Nigeria. It is presently a thing of concern that most young teachers in their various disciplines find it difficult to actually deliver qualitative instructions in schools as a result of the kind of teacher's educational programmes available in these institutions that are questionable based on the National university Commission benchmark for accreditation of programmes.

These factors have been attributed to the increase in the rate of failure among secondary school students in external examination due to the quality of teachers available to the services of State Governments of Nigeria. It is a common practice now in Nigeria to subject certified teachers that in the employment of the states in Nigeria to a quality evaluation test in order to determine their suitability to remain in their public service

It is worthy of note that most studies all over the world indicates that a good teacher adds value to the learning process in the school which invariably will effectively help students to improve in their learning outcomes (Harry & Yau et al, 2014). Furthermore, Guadalupe (2019) argues that, teachers are the primary agents of educational systems since they are directly responsible to students learning experiences. Education in the eyes of the general public and government is seen as a mechanical production system in which inputs generate results without much emphasis on the roles of the teachers in this equation but a careful reflection of the educational process indicates that educational experience is rather a systematic process of social relations that exist between the teacher and students in which the former actions is critical in school socialization in spite of the adverse conditions that exist in Nigerian schools.

Nigeria which was one of the fore-runner of African developing countries with good and buoyant economy in the 1970 to 1985 failed in her responsibilities in the development of a viable and functional education system that

are sustainable and as a result, its leaders failed to put her backward in the development of her economy and critical infrastructure with the blessings from her natural resources by adding value to it for the benefits of the society. The demolition of its critical treasure base until recently was attributed to pessimism, cynicism, corruption, indolence, redolent, exploitation; moral, social, political and economic addiction to oil economy at the expense of their sectors of other sectors of the economy (Aninwene, 2011).

The standard of educational system in Nigeria is troublesome, questionable and distorted due to foreseen and unforeseen circumstances. It is a fact that, the state of a nation's economy invariably affects the educational system due to the problems of finance, it may be arguable to suggest here that, certificates issued in Nigerian tertiary institutions are undergoing serious scrutiny, this is due to the fact that; these certificates are no longer a fair representation of knowledge, conceptual skills, technical skills and humanistic skills of the holder.

In supporting this, Aninwene (2011) argues that, Nigeria is paying more attention to paper qualification which does not reflect technical know-how and productive ability, knowledge and skills. He further stated that, this situation has resulted to desperado among secondary school students and those in the tertiary institutions to acquire certificates by all means therefore encouraging an increase in the rate of examination malpractice and the would be teachers are also part of this corrupt process of certificate laundry.

The need to meet the demands for quality teachers in Nigeria resulted to the establishment of Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria. This was a major attempt by the Federal Government of Nigeria to professionalize and standardize teacher education due to poor academic performance and achievement of the Nigerian child but the extent to which the objectives of this policy have been achieved is a thing for further research.

Mbachu (2011) opines that education has always been a strong feature of human societies and the teacher has always been regarded as an important dispensing element of education in the present time. The possibility of any meaningful development at the national level depends large to the quality and effectiveness of education provided by government to her citizenry. Consequently, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) states that "no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers". This statement implies that, Nigeria educational system will not be effective and efficient resulting to her productivity unless she has a sound teacher education programme that are geared towards meeting the global demand for quality teachers.

The global demand for qualitative production of professional teachers seems to be a dream in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that, evidence abounds to show that the performance of student teachers during teaching practice is not encouraging. This impression becomes a truism because performance is usually regarded as a reflection of the training given to the teachers in the training process. Consequently, Odigie (2006) observes that an improved performance of students in teaching practice therefore must be an improvement in the students training process.

In the same vein, Okeke (2004) opines that there is a dearth of able professors for training of teachers in colleges and technical colleges of Education in Nigeria, partly because training colleges are so often isolated from research and from the main-stream of education. Thus, these go on to suggest that; if quality as well as number is to be maintained in the teacher production process, the selection mechanism must meet the global standard and there must be an increase of input into the teacher training colleges of first rate trainers and a good trainable human material to meet the global demand and needs for qualitative teacher education in Nigeria.

In supporting this view, Agala (2014) opines that teacher's education should be more focused on professional training in order for the teacher to develop professional attitude and as the student trainee teacher should be given appropriate professional training resulting to the award of NCE, B.Ed, PGDE, M.Ed and Ph.D in education for teachers at the higher institutions in Nigeria. The elements of professional training as postulated by him includes appropriate training, specialization in relevant area of study, dedication to duty, respect for professional ethics, possession of good teaching skills, resourceful and respect for public rules.

The professional attitude according to Hall as cited in Agala (2014), is not limited to development of confidence without being arrogant, polite, firm and fair in relating with learners, observes punctuality and appropriate tidiness in dress and adequate preparation before entering class. Education is seen as the process whereby cultural heritage-values, attitudes, rules, knowledge, norms and belief system are transmitted from one generation to another in a pragmatic manner through the process of socialization and this process of transmitting these values falls squarely on the shoulders of the teacher. Education according to Tepperman, Curtis and Albanese (2008) is generally implicitly seen as the formal learning that takes place in schools and other sites that give specific courses, learning programmes or certificates in an organized way.

Consequently, teacher's socialization in this context refers to the broad range of direct and indirect learning related to humans' ability to comprehend, recognize, internalize and acquire the rules and expectations of the social world to the discharge of their statutory responsibilities based on the value systems of the society. The trainee teachers invariably undergo a socialization process that are geared towards transmitting acceptable values which would equip

the individual with personal, intellectual and professional qualities of making them good teachers such as empathy, compassionate and caring, forgoing, kind and friendly, patience, high personal integrity, decent in language and dressing.

Consequently, teacher education according to Wosu (2017) is a system of education for the production of teachers for various levels of education in any country. Furthermore, the aim of teacher education is to train enough qualified teachers to man the educational sector of the economy.

2. THE CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Teacher education is the component of any educational system that is geared towards the development, training and education of persons to gain the skills, competences and pedagogy of instruction for the purposes of improving the worth of teachers in the school structure. It is a kind of education planned to equip a probable teacher with the competences and knowledge of teaching effectively, efficiently and resulting to higher productivity in the economy sector of education.

Teacher education according to Achuonye (2010) refers to policies and procedures intended to equip teachers with the skills, information, attitudes and behaviours they required to execute their tasks successfully and efficiently in discharging their functions in the classroom and school in general. It is the dedicated intellectual and functional training given to trainee teacher in a formal school system for the purposes of certification to perform their professional roles or functions efficiently in the classroom. A trained teacher could be certified and awarded the following certificates in Nigeria based on the duration of the training. These certificates are Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed), Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc.Ed), Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Masters of Education (M.Ed), Masters of Science Education (MSc.Ed.) and Doctor of Philosophy in Education (Ph.D.).

The National Policy on Education (NPE)(2014) in section 72 stipulates that, all teachers in the Nigerian educational system should be professionally trained to produce teachers that are highly motivated, diligent and competent with intellectual and professional background for all levels of our educational system that enhances the spirit of enquiry and creativity. The objectives of teacher education are very laudable but it is faced with catastrophic challenges in its implementation and as such may not be tenable due to the type of apathy shown by various stakeholders at all levels.

It is worthy to note that the National Policy on Education (2014) also specified the steps to be adopted in the implementation of teacher education objectives but events seem to prove otherwise. The document asserts that all teachers in educational institutions such as Colleges of Education, Faculty of Education, Institute of Education, National Teachers Institute, and Schools of Education in Polytechnics, National Institute for Nigerian Language (NINLAN) and National Mathematical Centre should be structured to equip teachers for the effective and efficient performance of their duties, effectively and efficiently resulting to higher productivity in instructional delivery but it is indeed still a dream to be actualized in the Nigeria history and policy implementation of teacher education.

Consequently, in order to improve and enhance the quality of teaching, the government of Nigeria prescribed the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) as the minimum qualification for teaching in basic education level for professionalization of the system and as such; teacher's grade was abolished. (NPE, 2014). According to the National Commission for Colleges of Education in Nigeria (2019), there are 177 Colleges of Education made up of public and privately owned colleges of education. It consist of 21 federal, 82 private, 9 polytechnics, 13 Other allied institutions and 49state colleges of education and these colleges are directly funded by government for the public colleges; and most of them are having accreditation problems of their courses. They are also faced with more challenges in the development of infrastructure and they were created as part of social goods provided by the government for the purpose of meeting the high demand for enrolment into higher; and this is not applicable to the private Colleges of Education that are profit driven or oriented without any political undertone for its location.

3. CHALLENGES OF NIGERIAN TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education in the 21st Century Nigeria is faced with certain issues. Such issues include globalization, accreditation problems, technology, and standardization of quality, accessibility, availability and affordability of the programme in Nigeria. Hence, Maduewesi & Ezeobi (2010) opine that teacher education occupies an important position in the educational sector in Nigeria and it is faced with the challenges of globalization, quality of the programme, access, motivation and commitment of teachers, information and communication technology. The other constraints involved in teacher education includes lack of facilities, politics of location of colleges of education, staff-

student ratio, polity and policy inconsistency, problems of certificate classifications, corruption, lack of accountability, associated problems of host communities, examination malpractice, corruption, insecurity, cultism etc.

4. QUALITY OF PROGRAMME AND PRODUCTS

Teachers in most schools in Nigeria have been accused of dereliction of duties as a result of high increase in failures of external examination among students in secondary schools. This has been attributed to so many factors including the quality of teachers produced in Colleges of Education and Faculties of education in Nigerian Universities. It is on record that, most students who wrote the Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria qualifying examinations failed it. This may be attributed to the quality of accredited programmes offered in these schools resulting to the common phenomenon known as half-baked graduates that are intellectually deficient in areas of specialization. Hence, the accreditation approved for these institutions is becoming questionable due to the incident of corruptions prevalent in our societies.

It is now a common assumption that the quality of teacher education programme in Nigeria determines the quality of teachers that are presently in the services of both government and private institutions in Nigeria. This problem of quality of teacher's education invariably affects the ability of recruiting schools, agencies and organizations to lure, attract, support and retain a diverse workforce in their organizations due to the fact that, teachers' quality influences students' academic performance or achievement.

The problem of quality of teacher's education made Anugwo (2010) to opine that, teachers cannot broadly define the content of their lesson and effectively deliver the skills in evaluation procedures theoretically, creatively, originally and practically to the levels of their students. The problems of inability of some teachers to fit into the qualities of an effective and efficient teacher may be attributed to their poor instructional delivery methods and knowledge of subject matter. This is reflected in the performance of students in their external examinations that are standardized and have become a major source of worries for parents and other stakeholders in the development of child education.

5. ADMISSIONS OF STUDENTS

The criterion for admitting undergraduate students in teacher education seems to be compromised by the school management for the purposes of increasing their internal generated revenue in the face of paucity of funding the government and the inability of the authorities of these institutions to attract private funding and investment by critical stakeholders in the system. In an attempt to attract students to the various departments offering educational courses, the university management as a policy lowers the admission requirement thereby admitting students with low intellectual ability and the capacity to cope with the course content when compared to the courses that are deemed to be favourable for employment and attracts high prestige. The consequences of this policy encourage the production of low quality teachers that are regarded as half-baked graduates. In supporting this view, Uwakwe (2006) opines that, the major problems of music education in Nigeria is the quality of teachers, and the teachers lack in-depth knowledge of the broad spectrum of music as well as methodology to teach the subject effectively resulting to poor performance of their students.

6. FACILITIES PROBLEMS

Nigeria educational system is undergoing major stress in the provision of basic facilities for teaching and learning ideal for effective teaching and learning in an ecofriendly environment. It is more pronounced in the universities apart from the regular intervention of TETFUND, no deliberate policy exists in the acquisition and funding of school mapping plant and classroom management as regards teacher's education.

In the same vein, Nwankwoala (2018) avers that, in Nigeria there is a negative attitude to maintenance culture due to the fact that huge amount of money are almost times invested on the construction and building of structures in government institutions, but little or nothing is budgeted for maintenance of such structures. It is important to note that, educational administrators should endeavour to put in place a well thought out school plant maintenance policy that are designed to improve the attitude of staff and students on the use of the school facilities. It becomes imperative that students should be made to pay for the improper usage or damage to the facilities for regular replacement and maintenance of the equipment.

The dynamic nature of education in global setting coupled with increasing technological and communication development had helped to compound the problems of teacher education in Nigeria consequently. Wosu, Ukudor and Uriah (2017) point out the following as the basic challenges of teachers' education responsible for the poor quality of

teacher's education in Nigeria as Lack of practice of continuous assessment, lack of interest in teaching, non-professionalization of teaching in Nigeria, low morale and; lack of incentives to the teachers in training.

Teacher's education in Nigeria is faced with a plethora of problems such as poor policy implementation of programmes, brain drain syndrome, lack of smart classrooms with e-facilities, poor library facilities, quality assurance and internal efficiency; insufficient knowledge of ICT by staff and students, poor funding of educational programme, student-staff ratio, polity and policy inconsistency in teachers education, problems of classification of certificates, accreditation irregularities, examination mal-practice, insecurity and corruption etc.

In conclusion, teacher education is the pivot of human and societal development of any nation and it is pertinent to note that no education will be higher than the quality of her teachers. Consequently, it is the teacher that would teach the medical doctors, pilots, engineers and teachers that will contribute to the development of the Nigerian society.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government should enact policies that will ensure adequate investment in teacher's education by instituting special endorsement programmes.
2. Computer education should be made compulsory in teacher's education in order to improve their skills in the use of modern information systems in instructional delivery.
3. The community power structure should be involved in the development of institutional security architecture to prevent the high level of insecurity in the campuses.
4. The accreditation of programmes should be verified using E-Systems that transmit instant scores on real time to eliminate the human manipulative influence on the final outcome.
5. Modern library facilities should be installed in departments and faculties apart from the central library for easy access to the e-books.

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